

**MRIP Listening Session**  
**South Atlantic Fisheries Management Council**  
**Summary Report**

**Location:** Charleston, SC

**Date:** March 26, 2008

**Purpose:** To gather input from South Atlantic Fisheries Management Council members and staff, state partners and constituents to assure that the MRIP design we are developing is appropriately tailored to the specific fishery management and stock assessment needs of the region. Further, such an assessment will enable us to begin to identify and prioritize regional needs for MRIP projects for the next round of project funding, with FY 2008 funds.

**MRIP Team Members:** Gordon Colvin, Preston Pate, Rob Andrews and Scott Sauri

**Agencies/Groups Represented:** SAFMC, State of South Carolina and State of Georgia

**Attachments:** Agenda, list of attendees, Research and Monitoring Priorities Plan for SAFMC

**Major Points and Comments :**

1. Commercial fishermen need to be involved and receive information about development of MRIP. The SAFMC allows the sale of bag limit caught fish that count against commercial quotas.
2. Priority need for the next five years is to improve ability to track quotas.
3. Need to consider how current and future data delivery is meeting the needs of the end user.
4. There needs to be information that fishermen can access to check on recreational quotas and track landings.
5. There needs to be clarification about who will be responsible for tracking harvest and quotas.
6. Making the surveys too complex could have negative effects on angler participation. Program priorities should be developed and the surveys be designed accordingly.

**Comments on Data Needs:**

1. Timing of data availability needs to be improved relative to stock assessment schedule. Monthly estimates would be better.
2. For assessments, direct sampling for ages is needed. Age-length keys don't work for many South Atlantic species. Sex-ratio samples are also needed for some species.
3. Biological data on discards needs to be improved.
4. Water depth of catch and condition of catch upon release needs to be added to survey.
5. Better spatial resolution will help estimate landings in areas of special concern such as Monroe County, FL and Cape Hatteras, NC
6. More creative survey approaches (logbooks, angler diaries, panel surveys, etc.) may be needed to get timely and precise estimates for rare-event catches of important species like snowy grouper and golden tilefish, as well as for discard data.
7. Tournament catches may be of importance to assessments and ACL tracking, especially for species such as king mackerel for which tournament landings are becoming more significant.
8. Shorter wave periods will benefit management, i.e. better notice of when ACLs are being approached.
9. Shorter (monthly) wave periods may benefit assessments of stocks with fishing years that differ from calendar years. (but shorter than monthly would probably not add much)
10. Timely harvest data needs to be available at each Council meeting.
11. Wave one should be added to South Atlantic.
12. Headboat data is very important for stock assessments
13. Generally: The South Atlantic Council's Research and Monitoring Priorities Plan identifies recreational data needs in detail. MRIP's future design should consider the needs identified in the Plan.

### **Socioeconomic Data Needs:**

1. Surveys need to collect zip code and expenditure information.
2. Better socioeconomic data is necessary to assess impacts of changes to size and bag limits.
3. Willingness-to-pay data is needed. Can surveys be modified to better get this kind of economic data?
4. While every two years would be ideal, needs could be met with surveys every three years.
5. It is expected that ACL's will result in demands for allocations and additional and more timely socio-economic data will be needed to support allocation decisions. This may also include allocations by state in the future.

### **Future Projects:**

1. Develop a pilot project for collecting age information from angler catch
2. A project needs to be developed to better sample large pelagics and other rare event species.
3. Given the high priority for improved discard information, the region will closely follow the progress of the current discard project and may propose project supplements to further explore improved discard data, including condition and length of released fish.
4. A project to evaluate the significance to tournament catches and to pilot means to efficiently and appropriately incorporate tournament catch estimates could be considered.

### **Outreach and Education Needs**

1. Regions need guidance from Headquarters on approval of messages.
2. Need to get "ownership" of the program and the data by anglers. Getting them to be a part of the program and for more actual angler interaction with the surveys would help achieve this.
3. There are some basic educational needs for fishermen, such as how surveys work, how to release fish , how to identify fish. We should not lose track of these basic needs in our outreach.
4. Consider working with Sea Grant on outreach and education.